

In the second paragraph on page 2 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 14 have been rejected as being anticipated by Wirz (US Pat. No. 5,479,856) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

As will be explained below, it is believed that the claims were patentable over the cited art in their original form and the claims have, therefore, not been amended to overcome the references.

The Wirz reference is owned by the corporate assignee of the instant application and Applicants are therefore very familiar with this reference.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claims 1 and 14 call for, inter alia:

a second printing machine having a sheet delivery and at least one zoneless metering device for uniformly metering at least one of ink and varnish, respectively, over a printing width. (Emphasis added by Applicant.)

A very important feature of claims 1 and 14 of the instant application is the zoneless metering for metering ink or varnish. The Examiner has stated that Wirz discloses a zoneless ink metering device 8 for transferring ink during

printing (see lines 6-7 in the second paragraph on page 2 of  
eh Office action). Applicant respectfully disagrees. As  
described in column 5, lines 33-34 of Wirz, the reference sign  
"8" refers to a device for structuring, that is imaging, a  
printing plate disposed on the plate cylinder (see also column  
7, lines 36-40). The reference sign "8" in Wirz in no way  
refers to a metering device, let alone a zoneless metering  
device. In other words, the device 8 in Wirz is exactly an  
imaging device 20 as described page 9, lines 1-3 of the  
specification of the instant application. This can be clearly  
seen from the figure of Wirz, in which the reference sign "8"  
is shown, and Fig. 1 of the instant application, in which the  
reference sign "20" is shown. The purpose of this kind of  
imaging device is to burn in pixels in the printing plate by  
laser radiation and thereby provide the printing plate with  
printing image.

Wirz discloses an inking unit 7 (see column 5, line 32).  
Although a person skilled in the art may assume that the  
printing machine system disclosed in Wirz should have a  
metering device (a person skilled in the art would, however,  
not assume a zoneless metering device), he/she would know that  
the metering device must be a part of the inking unit 7 and  
therefore cannot be the device with reference 8 in Wirz.

Clearly, Wirz does not show "a second printing machine having a sheet delivery and at least one zoneless metering device for uniformly metering at least one of ink and varnish, respectively, over a printing width", as recited in claims 1 and 14 of the instant application.

Claims 1 and 14 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over Wirz and since claims 5, 6, 8 and 10 are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In the paragraph bridging pages 2 and 3 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 2 and 3 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Wirz in view of Kolbe et al. (US Pat. No. 6,016,748) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). In the second paragraph on page 3 of the above-mentioned Office action, claim 4 has been rejected as being unpatentable over Wirz in view of Hofmann et al. (US Pat. No. 5,503,674) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

It is well known that inking units with very few rollers, especially inking units for flexographic printing machines (see column 1, line 7 of Kolbe et al.), typically contain a zoneless metering device. In contrast, inking units with a lot of rollers, especially inking units for offset printing machines (see column 4, line 51 of Wirz), typically contain a metering device that is divided into ink zones, namely one

that is not zoneless. Therefore, although Kolbe et al. and Hofmann et al. disclose a zoneless metering device, a person skilled in the art would not combine the zoneless metering device in Kolbe et al. or Hofmann et al. to Wirz.

In other words, it is not obvious to use the zoneless metering device suitable for flexographic printing machines and inking units with few rollers as disclosed in Kolbe et al. and Hofmann et al. to the inking unit 7 suitable for offset printing machines and having a lot of rollers as disclosed in Wirz.

Due to the large number of rollers in the inking unit 7 in Wirz, a person skilled in the art can only assume that this inking unit has a metering device divided into ink zones, but not a zoneless metering device.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1 and 14. Claims 1 and 14 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and because claims 2-4 are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In the third paragraph page 3 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 6 and 7 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Wirz under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

As discussed above, claim 1 is believed to be patentable over the art. Because claims 6-7 are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In the paragraph bridging pages 3 and 4 of the above-mentioned Office action, claim 11 has been rejected as being unpatentable over Wirz in view of Rodi (US Pat. No. 5,115,741) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

As discussed above, claim 1 is believed to be patentable over the art. Because claim 11 is ultimately dependent on claim 1, it is believed to be patentable as well.

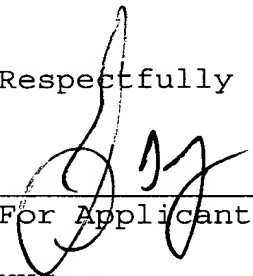
Applicant appreciates the Examiner's statement in the second paragraph on page 4 of the above-mentioned Office action that claim 9 is allowed.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-11 and 14 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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